

| A |

RCIA Terms: Retrieved from Team RCIA <http://www.teamrcia.com/ask-a-question-2/rcia-glossary/>

acclamation: a short sung statement

assembly: all who gather for a liturgy

| B |

Book of the Elect: a book that serves as both a record of those elected each year and a symbol of God's chosen people

| C |

candidate: a baptized Christian who is preparing to become a Catholic; in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the term "candidate" is also used to refer to the subjects of a rite, which includes catechumens and inquirers

cantor: one who leads the assembly in song

catechesis: Greek, meaning "sounding down" or "re-echoing down to another"; a way of communicating faith

catechumen: Greek, meaning "one in whom word echoes"; one who celebrated the Rite of Acceptance; an unbaptized person who is preparing for full initiation at the Easter Vigil

catechumenate: the period of time and the structure within which the catechumens prepare for initiation; "catechumenate" is also used as a synonym for the entire *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*

convert: another term for a catechumen; "convert" should never be used to refer to a baptized person who is preparing to become a Catholic;

| D |

dismissal: a sending; catechumens are sent after homily to reflect on God's Word; the baptized are sent at Mass to "go, love and serve the Lord;" not meant to separate but to enable one's mission

| E |

elect: name given to catechumens chosen by God and affirmed by the Church as ready to celebrate baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at the next Easter Vigil; catechumens who have gone through the Rite of Election or Enrollment Rite on the first Sunday of Lent; the elect are those who are involved in immediate preparation for initiation at the upcoming Easter Vigil

election: the formal liturgical act of choosing those who have been called by God to celebrate the initiation sacraments; the election is proclaimed by the Bishop of a diocese

enrollment of names: another name for the Rite of Election; the formal liturgical act of gathering and recording the names of those ready to be initiated at the next Easter Vigil

evangelization: first stage of RCIA, of unfixed duration, also called inquiry or precatechumenate; proclaiming faith in Christ; mission of the baptized

exegesis: the scholarly, scientific interpretation of the Scriptures

| G |

Gathering Rite: the beginning of a liturgy that helps the assembly unite and focus on the liturgy

godparent: a person chosen by a catechumen to be a lifelong companion and mentor in the Christian faith; someone who makes a life-long commitment to be a spiritual mentor to a catechumen who decides to be baptized; can be the same person as the sponsor

| I |

inquirer: name given to the unbaptized who are drawn to the Christian way of life; a person seeking basic information about Catholicism or Christianity; this person may or may not eventually join the church; also called a "precatechumen"

| L |

lectionary: the official, liturgical book from which the reader (lector) proclaims the Scripture readings used in the Liturgy of the Word

liturgy: a set structure of prayers, readings, songs, and symbolic actions that is celebrated by a group of people together

Liturgy of the Eucharist: the prayers and songs around the altar, and the sharing of consecrated bread and wine during the Mass

Liturgy of the Word: the proclamation of Scripture and songs from the Bible followed by a reflection and prayers

| M |

Mass: one of the liturgies of the Church that consists of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist

mystagogy: a process for reflecting on an encounter with God in order to discover the meaning for one's life behind the encounter; means "study of the mysteries;" this reflection process can be used after any liturgical celebration; also the name of the period following baptism

| N |

neophyte: a newly baptized person; means "new plant"

| P |

psalm: a song from the book of Psalms found in the Bible

| R |

RCIA: stands for "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults;" process for becoming Christian

RCIC and RCIY: fictional beasts; there is only one rite—the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults; adaptations of this one rite are made for children, youth, and previously baptized people; the only appropriate acronym is “RCIA;” in the parish, more user-friendly terms are encouraged

Rite of Acceptance: first public rite for those becoming Catholic; marks transition from inquiry period to catechumenate period

Rite of Election: a liturgical rite that takes place at the beginning of Lent which formally names those who will be baptized at the next Easter Vigil

| S |

scrutinies: the three scrutinies are rituals for the [elect](#) that “are meant to uncover, then heal, all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect” (RCIA 141). They are normally celebrated on the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Sundays of Lent.

signing of the senses: ritual act of tracing the sign of the cross on the catechumen’s forehead and other parts of the body during the Rite of Acceptance

sponsor: a companion that walks with a catechumen or candidate through the catechumenate process; ideally assigned to a catechumen by the parish, in discussion with the catechumen or candidate

suffrages: The National Statutes state that the catechumens should be encouraged to seek blessings and “other suffrages” from the church (8). *Suffrages* can be any prayer for the catechumens. Specifically, the RCIA offers the minor exorcisms as examples of suffrages that might be prayed for the catechumens.

| T |

Triduum: the “three-days” of Easter; day 1: Holy Thursday evening to Good Friday evening; day 2: Good Friday evening to Holy Saturday evening; day 3: Easter Vigil to Easter Evening Prayer; the normative time when unbaptized persons are baptized into the Church at the Easter Vigil; in addition to Sundays, the most important feast of the year

| W |

worship aid: a booklet given to the assembly that includes the music, prayers, and other information to help them participate in the liturgy

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

Becoming a Catholic is a process of conversion, and one that takes place within the community of the faithful. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the roadmap for the spiritual journey, a gradual process that varies according “to the many forms of God’s grace, the free cooperation of the individual, the actions of the church and the circumstances to time and place.” (RCIA #5) Some important words to take note of are *gradual process, conversion and journey*. Conversion happens when conversion happens; it can’t really be scheduled ahead of time. So we understand that the Rite of Christian Initiation is celebrated gradually, over a period of time, with major liturgical events that mark important moments in the process. The journey of conversion and initiation into Christ is different for each person.

Retrieved from: <http://www.drvc.org/worship/RCIA>

Period of Evangelization & Precatechumenate, the Inquiry

This is the time when a person inquires at a parish about becoming a Catholic. He or she is gently welcomed into an Inquiry group, where some of their basic questions are answered. It doesn’t have any particular time frame – it begins for a person when he or she begins an inquiry, and, if wishing to continue, concludes whenever she is ready to become a catechumen. The responsibility of the parish is to answer questions the inquirer has, and to help them understand God’s call. Early in this period, a team member will make use of the Pre-Initiation Inventory form, making sure that there would be no obstacles to the person becoming a Catholic. The inquiry should be long enough so that the desire to come to know Christ, follow Him, and seek baptism can grow. In time, the inquirer and the parish team together discern whether it is appropriate to become a catechumen. **The Rite of Acceptance** marks the movement from being an inquirer to becoming a catechumen.

The Catechumenate

A catechumen is someone who is learning how to live as a Catholic Christian, coming to know Jesus and the beliefs of the Church. “They are joined to the church, and are members of the household of Christ, since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations.” (RCIA 47)

Inquirers are welcomed into the Catechumenate through the celebration of the **Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens**. During this rite, the candidates are signed with the sign of the Cross, and accept the gospel as the pathway for their journey. During this period, which may last a year or more, the catechumens study the Scriptures and the beliefs of the Church, and come to know Jesus better. They learn to ask how these might call to a

conversion of heart and life. The members of their parish are involved as they give witness by their lifestyle, and join together in prayer for them. Their sponsors, usually members of the local parish community, join with them in catechetical sessions, and Breaking Open the Word. Such sponsor-friends are always ready to answer questions and reflect with them on the Catholic way of life. The church has a special rites for the catechumens during this period: Blessings and prayers, and the Anointing with Oil of the Catechumens. This anointing is for strengthening the person to accept the challenges of Christian life, and to understand the gospel more deeply.

After a period of discernment, the catechumens are ready to be fully initiated, that is, to receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil. A major liturgical celebration takes place on the First Sunday of Lent, when the catechumens meet with the bishop at the **Rite of Election**. Here the Bishop, in God's name, calls the catechumens to the Easter sacraments. Each person signs the Book of the Elect, signifying that they are now among God's Elect, preparing the full initiation.

Period of Purification and Enlightenment

This period coincides with the season of Lent, and is a 40-day period of reflection (and excitement) for the catechumens, now called "the elect of the Church." The 3rd, 4th and 5th Sunday of Lent are especially important, with their baptismal themes of water (the Samaritan Woman), light (the cure of the man born blind) and life (the raising of Lazarus from the dead). At these Masses, the Scrutinies are celebrated, during which we pray that the elect might be strengthened against the sin around them, to "uncover then heal all that is weak, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong and good." The whole church prays with the Elect for the graces needed to prepare well to profess their faith in God, and to celebrate the sacraments of Initiation.

The Easter Vigil

On this most sacred of all nights, when the Church commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, the elect are asked to renounce the devil and profess their faith in God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. Before the whole community, they are baptized with water and anointed with the oil of Chrism. They are clothed in the white garment signifying the newness of life. They are now called Christian, and can participate for the first time as members of the faithful in the great Eucharistic Prayer. The crowning moment of their initiation is at the altar when they share for the first time in eating and drinking the Body and Blood of Christ, completing their full transformation into the image of Christ by becoming what they eat.

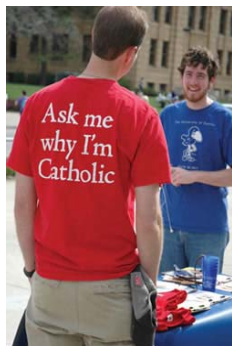
Mystagogy

During the 50 days of Easter, the Neophytes ("new plants" of the church) become a sign to the Church of new life. They continue to reflect together on the extraordinary experience of the

sacraments they have received: the water Baptism, the infusion of the Spirit in Confirmation, and participation in the Body and Blood of Christ at the Eucharist. They are invited to reflect on the Sunday gospels, how they connect with the sacraments they have received, and their new life in the Church.

As the period of Mystagogy ends with the feast of Pentecost, the neophytes are sent out to the world as were those first disciples, strengthened by the Holy Spirit for mission. The newly baptized are invited to gather together monthly to continue reflecting on their new life in Christ. In addition, each year all the newest members of the Church are invited to celebrate their initiation.

R.C.I.A. is truly a *year-round* process which begins for you when YOU decide you want to begin to explore the Catholic faith. Every month, your specific RCIA group (children, teens, families, and adults) will be engaged in thoughtful preparation for the sacraments. It is your opportunity to "feast" on the richness of the word of God -- the Bible -- and the treasury of the Catholic faith -- traditions centuries old yet still vibrant today. You will be taking the time to learn a different way of living, of *being*. It is our hope and our prayer that through the RCIA process, you will come to embrace Catholicism as your way of life.



What is R.C.I.A.? In 1988, the Catholic Bishops of the United States directed that adults becoming Catholic do so by a unique faith formation process called RCIA. R.C.I.A. is the **R**ite of **C**hristian **I**nitiation of **A**dults. It has also been adapted for children (over the age of seven) and for teens.

What are the Sacraments of Initiation?



There are actually *three* Catholic sacraments of Christian initiation -- Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. You are being prepared to receive all three on the same night. (If you have already received Christian baptism, you are also being prepared for three sacraments -- Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist. You will not be asked to be baptized again.)

It is during *the* most special night of the entire Church year -- Holy Saturday (or the Easter Vigil) -- that the Church receives those to be baptized whom during the Lenten Season, she has called "The Elect of God". Through the Rite of **Baptism**, you will be asked to publicly reject Satan and submit to the waters of baptism. This baptism symbolizes the death of your old life. By rising out of the water, you are truly born again. You now have a **new life**, a new identity! You are now **Christian**, sharing in the identity of **Jesus Christ**, our Lord and Savior, "light from light, true God from true God." (Nicene Creed c. 325)

After water **baptism**, your godparent covers you with a white baptismal robe and gives you a newly lighted candle. It is a reminder of your New Life, your Rebirth. You are now accepting the responsibility to be a loving light to your family, your friends, co-workers, your community as Jesus Christ is Light to the entire world.

Immediately following Baptism, you (*the "neophyte" or "newly planted"*) are anointed with Sacred Chrism. It is a strengthening sign of the Sacrament of **Confirmation**. To be confirmed is to embrace the fullness of the Holy Spirit --to speak of Jesus with clarity and truth and love.

While you are still glistening with baptismal water and sacred chrism, you rejoin your companions and family in the pews. United in the Church's prayers, you prepare to fully receive our Lord. This is **Eucharist** (Holy Communion). Using the common elements of bread and wine, Jesus, the Lord of the Universe, humbles Himself so that His Body can be placed in our hands and on our tongues. So that His Body can now be intimately a part of our body. Now you **can be** Him to others. You become the face of Christ to a world in need. Imagine the possibilities! Your mission is not to serve yourself, but -- in His name -- to offer yourself in service to others.

he Four Important Stages of the RCIA process

(an explanation

of the fullness of conversion to the Roman Catholic Christian faith): **Inquiry**, **Catechumenate**, **Purification and Enlightenment**, and **Mystagogy**.



What is **Inquiry?**

~Is open-ended; take your time to decide

~You should attend at least ten sessions before moving into the Catechumenate Period.

~Is also for *baptized* Christians who would like to receive the Catholic sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation.

~You can remain in Inquiry as long as you like.

~Provides you with "Basic Catholic" information (The Trinity, The Creed, Church History, Prayer, Basic Doctrine, the Saints)

~Is a time of spiritual discernment through group discussion and reflection.

~Allows plenty of time for *your* questions -- of the Church and of yourself: *"Is God really leading you to the lifelong adventure of a Catholic Christian?"*

~Ends when you enter the **Catechumenate** via a retreat with your sponsor which prepares you both for your participation in the R.C.I.A. initial rite -- the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome. Twice a year (in January and June), this Rite is celebrated at a weekend Mass. **Our next Rite of Acceptance and Welcome is scheduled for Sunday, August 26 @ the 9:00 a.m. Mass.**

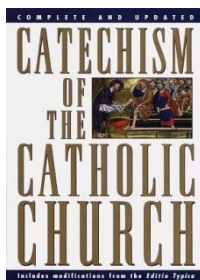


What is the **Catechumenate Period?**

The Church arises out of
discussion
compromise, and
resolution."
Pope Benedict XVI

It begins at the Rite of Acceptance and Welcome.

- *If you have never been baptized*, you are now called a **Catechumen** (one who is under serious instruction about the Catholic faith)
- *If you are baptized*, you are now called a **Candidate for Continuing Conversion to the Christian Faith**. (*If you are already baptized, your time in the Catechumenate is usually less than one year*)
- Like the **Inquiry** Period, this time is *open-ended*.



- Provides a time of deeper exploration of Catholic doctrine, tradition, and bible study within a small group setting during Sunday Mass Dismissal sessions. These sessions are in addition to the Tuesday night meetings.

- All catechumens are expected to attend Sunday Mass Dismissal sessions. Through service to others, apprenticing our Catholic faith-in-action at our parish and in our communities of home, work, and school.
- Full participation in Retreats and other special faith formation activities
- For the catechumen, it ends on the First Sunday of Lent via the Rite of Sending and the Rite of Elect -- at the start of the **Purification and Enlightenment Period**.

* **If you are already baptized**, the **Catechumenate** Period varies, but you should know that:

You have already enjoyed the life of a baptized child of God. You are now making the decision to *fully embrace* your Baptism via the Catholic sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion.

- **If you are baptized Catholic**, after suitable preparation, you will receive your First Holy Communion and Confirmation during the Easter Season.
- **For all candidates**, the Sacrament of Reconciliation ("*1st Confession*") takes place at a retreat with your sponsor scheduled prior to your reception of Confirmation and First Holy Communion.
- *If you have not been baptized as a Catholic*, after suitable preparation, you will be asked to make a brief **Profession of Faith** at the same Mass at which you will receive your Confirmation and First Holy Communion. During the year, you will have two opportunities to receive the Catholic sacraments during our Rite of Reception -- one takes place in the Spring and the other takes place in the Fall.
- Sunday Dismissal sessions are optional for candidates; many have found participation to be a faith-enriching experience.



What is the **Purification and Enlightenment Period?**

- Begins with Ash Wednesday and continues throughout the Lenten Season.
- Only for the **Elect** who will be baptized on Holy Saturday, March 30th, 2013.
- Time of intense preparation.
- Special Lenten Rites of Election (*presentation by your sponsor to the parish at a Sunday Mass and to the Archbishop at the Cathedral*) and the three Lenten Sundays of the Scrutiny Rites (*sharing with the Sunday assembly what is keeping you from surrendering to the love of Jesus --and allowing us to pray for your spiritual and physical needs*)

Catechumens are now a part of the **Elect** of God.

- Ends as you enter the waters of Baptism on Holy Saturday.
- ***For those already baptized**, you are asked to attend all Lenten Rites as a way of supporting those whom you have come to know through the Inquiry and Catechumenate periods. You will receive Catholic Confirmation and First Holy Communion at later time (to be determined after RCIA instruction).

Get *connected*

Get closer

Mystagogy is the final period of R.C.I.A. It coincides with the Easter Season. Because you are a neophyte "newly planted", this is a time for you to fully dwell on the truth of the Sacramental life as a Roman Catholic.

It is a final six-week nurturing of the neophytes which lasts throughout the Easter Season.

You may continue to meet with the Sunday group for one-hour bible study/discussion after Mass or at another time convenient for the group.

- You now enjoy the *fullness* of Sunday Mass -- its readings, prayers, and meaning.
- Frequently feast on the Eucharist
- Mingle with the Sunday assembly before and after Mass. They will be eager to congratulate you!
- Seek ways to be an active Catholic parishioner.
- Consider mentoring someone who is considering Inquiry.

On **Pentecost Sunday** the **neophytes** receive their final R.C.I.A. blessing at weekend Mass. The blessing concludes with these prophetic words,

"Go forth now

to bring the love of Christ to others with all your body,

with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your heart.

Nothing is ending. All is beginning! Amen!"